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LETTER DATED 28 JANUARY 1993 FROM THE CHARGE D'AFFAIRES A.I.
OF THE PERMANENT MISSION OF BULGARIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS
ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of a Press Release of 27 January 1993 by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Bulgaria regarding the recent incident involving the unauthorized passage of the Serbian convoy towed by the tugship "Bihac" through the Bulgarian-Romanian sector of the Danube.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and the annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Jordan LOZANOV
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

Annex

Press Release of 27 January by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Bulgaria

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the other competent Bulgarian authorities responded with great consideration and adequate action to the extraordinary challenge of the United Nations sanctions against Serbia and Montenegro presented by the passage of the Serbian convoy of barges towed by the tugship "Bihac" through the common Bulgarian-Romanian sector of the Danube.

From the very entering of "Bihac", on 21 January, into the Bulgarian-Romanian sector the Bulgarian border authorities and the State Navigation Inspectorate made numerous, but unsuccessful, attempts to establish radiolink with the ship in order to inspect and verify its documents, cargo and destination.

On 23 January the Bulgarian Foreign Ministry requested the urgent convening of a meeting of the United Nations Sanctions Committee in New York to consider the incident. The meeting was held on the following day. Up to the present moment a written reply by the Sanctions Committee has not been received by the Bulgarian Mission in New York or the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. On the same day, 23 January, the Bulgarian authorities also informed the EC observer mission monitoring the Bulgarian border with former Yugoslavia as well as the EC/CSCE Sanctions Assistance Mission about the incident.

Proceeding from the shared responsibility of the Bulgarian and Romanian authorities since "Bihac" was navigating in the common sector of the Danube, on the Bulgarian border guard's initiative a meeting with their Romanian counterparts was held on 25 January in the town of Vidin. The aim of the meeting was to discuss possible action to halt the convoy for inspection. At the meeting the Romanian side stated that they did not have the means and capability for a joint operation involving use of force.

The Bulgarian authorities also contacted the Serbian side through diplomatic channels underscoring the grave alarm of the Bulgarian side caused by the provocative conduct of the Serbian ship's captain and expressing the hope that he would be influenced upon in order to obey the orders of the Bulgarian authorities.

The incident with "Bihac" once again categorically proved the necessity of attributing priority attention by the international community to the responsibility of the direct violators of the sanctions.

If such incidents are to be prevented in the future the establishing of close cooperation between the relevant Bulgarian and Romanian authorities is of decisive significance. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs once again appeals for the deployment of international sanctions monitoring missions at all ports along the lower course of the Danube and stresses the urgent need for

rendering substantial technical support to assist the border and customs control organs of Bulgaria and Romania in the implementation of the sanctions.